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Patients, Families, Governments Striving for Asthma Control

World Asthma Day brings awareness-raising, education activities around common lung disease

Dozens of events in countries spanning the globe will mark World Asthma Day on May 3, 2011. Activities, whether held in schools or hospitals, small village squares or bustling city shopping malls, will have in common the positive theme, "You Can Control Your Asthma".

In Hartford, the Central CT Health District, in partnership with the Region II Asthma Coalition and Hartford's ACTA (Asthma Call to Action Coalition), is sponsoring an event in the Nathan Hale Room at the State Capitol in Hartford from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases in the world, affecting more than 300 million people worldwide. It is characterized by recurrent breathing problems and symptoms such as breathlessness, wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing. Asthma symptoms vary over time, and also from individual to individual.

"New England has the highest rates of asthma in the country and this disease needs to be on the agenda of all legislators and public health officials", states Hilary Norcia, MPH - Coordinator of the Region II Asthma Coalition. "Asthma is especially affecting our children and this causes missed days of school and frequent ED visits that could be avoided with proper education and medical oversight."

However, asthma experts say that with proper treatment most asthma patients can achieve good control of their disease. The Region II Asthma Coalition and ACTA are joining efforts with the Global Asthma Initiative to call for increased efforts at asthma diagnosis, education, and treatment to enable more asthma sufferers to reach the goal of controlling their disease.

Experts are also calling for increased attention to asthma in children. Asthma often develops during childhood, and is the chronic disease most commonly causing absence from school. "We also want legislators, physicians and parents to know the importance of an asthma treatment plan. "These plans are vital in the control of asthma both at home and at school and should be mandated," says Norcia.

The Region II Asthma Coalition and ACTA are proud to be part of this worldwide effort.

Partnering organizations include: Aetna Better Health, American Lung Association, CT Department of Public Health, CT Children's Medical Center, CT Environmental Health Association, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice, Central CT Health District, Farmington Valley Health District, Hartford Health and Human Services, Hartford Neighborhood Healthy Homes Project, Merck Pharmaceuticals, New Britain Health Department, New Britain Asthma Initiative, North Central District Health Department, and Plainville Health Department, FaithCare, Inc., InhalerWear, Inc.

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